

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 4, 2018

Honorable Aung San Suu Kyi
State Counsellor
The Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Dear Ms. State Counsellor,

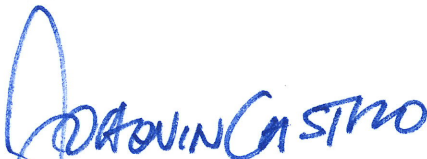
We are writing to urge you to publicly recommend the President of the Union of Myanmar commute the sentences of the journalists Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo, who otherwise would serve seven years in jail for investigating the massacre of Rohingya in your country. These two individuals were arrested, tried, and sentenced for their commitment to a central role of a free press – speaking truth to power. For their reporting and for their courage, Mr. Wa Lone and Mr. Kyaw Soe Oo were awarded the 2017 James Foley Medill Medal for Courage in Journalism by the prestigious Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University.

As the co-chairs of the bipartisan Congressional Caucus on ASEAN, we support the principles of democracy as enshrined in the ASEAN Charter agreed to by the ten member nations of ASEAN in 2007, including by the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. At the heart of every democracy is a free and independent press, one that is insulated from political interference and is empowered to check government abuses.

The international community is aghast at the events that have unfolded in your country in the last year. The ethnic cleansing of hundreds of thousands of Rohingya and the documented killings of innocent men, women, and children is compounded by these prosecutions that seek to cover up the full scope of what has transpired.

We recall your long struggle for democracy for all Burmese citizens, your years of imprisonment and your leadership during adversity. We ask you to demonstrate that commitment to democracy by supporting a free press and requesting the President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar commute the sentences of these two individuals. We also urge you to make genuine efforts to hold the military and others accountable for their crimes against the Rohingya people and facilitating a return for the Rohingya driven out of Burma through this violence.

Sincerely,



Joaquin Castro
Co-Chair
Congressional Caucus on ASEAN



Ann Wagner
Co-Chair
Congressional Caucus on ASEAN